

New Hampshire

Strategic Watershed Action Teams

Fall Report 2013

Trout Unlimited- is currently working with NRCS, NH Fish and Game and the Cheshire County Conservation District to develop high priority fish passage projects on State and Private lands. Over 100 crossings have been surveyed in recent years and currently the partnership is working to develop strategies for each crossing. As part of a greater effort for the Connecticut River Blueway, the Ashuelot River is an important tributary with a large conservation focus for wildlife, land protection and water quality projects.



Above: is an example of a concrete box culvert which blocks about a mile of critical headwater stream habitat. A simple solution for improving fish passage at these locations is to “backwater” the box culvert by placing larger stones adjacent to the lip of the culvert which increases the water depth in the culvert during low flows, and reduces the velocities at the entrance of the culvert.

Assistance to Wetlands Reserve Program- Trout Unlimited continues to provide technical expertise to the WRP program and continues to develop permits and on-the-ground direction for wood addition projects to order 1 and 2 streams which provides improved fish habitat as well as reduce flood velocities which are a problem due to increased storm durations and intensities from global climate change.

Natural Heritage Bureau- is continually working with NRCS to provide information on uncommon plants and wildlife. NRCS staff uses a GIS data base provided by NHB to prescreen projects and when conservation practices coexist with other uncommon species, our two agencies work together to find a solution which allows landowners to avoid impacts to the species.



Above: NRCS Resource Conservationist Rachael Philips-Tibbits works with NHB Botanist Pete Bowman (center) and Private TSP Forester Peter Ferrell to identify Small Whorled Pagonia (*Isotria medeoloides*) a federally threatened plant vs. Indian Cucumber (*Medeola virginiana*), which Pete is showing. The site visit was made to determine the locations of the rare plants in an effort to avoid them before wildlife patch cuts were created. The site visit proved to be a success and a small population was discovered and flagged.

NH Fish and Game- New England Cottontail biologist Heidi Holman works with a private contractor (below) to describe improving the habitat on a 50 acre shrubland. Heidi worked with NRCS to develop the first signed Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) with the private landowners and NRCS. This site will be one of the first private lands to have actively bred New England Cottontail's released.





Trout Unlimited and NH Fish and Game- work with NH Dept. of Transportation Engineers, NRCS, the Silvio Conte Wildlife Refuge and the Cheshire County Conservation District to look at an important tributary of the Ashuelot River. The newly formed partnership is looking to improve fish passage on public lands in combination with private lands to improve habitat and also improve the connection of the stream to the floodplains which helps mitigate the impacts of larger rain events.